from Wm. Charles

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THE CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE CHARGE

OF

SAMUEL Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER

TO THE CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE.

DELIVERED

AT HIS PRIMARY VISITATION

IN THE YEAR 1796.

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My Reverend Brethren,

WE are fallen upon Times, which, more perhaps than any which the Chriſtian Church hath ſeen, ſince its firſt ſtruggles with the powers of darkneſs in the three firſt centuries, require, in the Preachers of the Goſpel, thoſe two qualities in particular, which our Lord told the Twelve he required in *them*, when firſt he inveſted them with their high commiſſion, the Policy of the Serpent united with the Harmleſſneſs of the Dove.

Thoſe firſt preachers were ſent forth upon a work of ſingular difficulty. In which it is obvious, that ſo far as any human talents were, in any degree, concerned in the effect, that was to be wrought; Policy was of all others a moſt eſſential requiſite, to regulate the meaſures that were to be uſed, for the

final ſucceſs of ſo extraordinary an enterprize, which was of a nature to excite in the firſt outſet, as in fact it excited, the enmity and oppoſition of all mankind. The Apoſtles were to preach up a Religion, which, in its doctrines and its worſhip, was ſhocking, in the firſt place, to the prejudices of their own countrymen, ſuperſtitiouſly attached to the Moſaic Inſtitution, ill-underſtood. Among the Heathen, they had to encounter prejudices no leſs inveterate, ariſing from the general devotion of the nations to an Idolatry grown venerable by its antiquity, and calculated to captivate the many, by the pomp of its rites, the magnificence of its temples, and the gaiety of its feſtivals. They had in every country to ſtruggle with that, which, by the very principles of their Religion, they were no where permitted to reſiſt, the authority of government. The ſovereigns of the world had long experienced the utility even of a falſe religion to the purpoſes of ſocial life: and they entertained apprehenſions of the dangers of innovation. They perhaps beſides viewed the riſing church, in ſome degree, with a jealous eye. They ſaw, or they knew by report, the internal good order of the ſociety; the conſcientious ſub-

miſſion

miſſion of the laity to their ſpiritual paſtors; the reſpectful attendance of the deacons upon the prieſts, and the obedience of the whole congregation to the Biſhop. They were perhaps apprehenſive, that the hierarchy might in time become the rival of the ſecular authority: for they knew not that ſo long as it adhered to the genuine principles of Chriſtianity, this could never be. They thought it prudent to take part with the old Idolatry, as a religion already poſſeſſing the minds of the people, to an extent ſufficient for their purpoſes; while they, on the other hand, had the religion and its miniſters perfectly at command. And upon theſe principles, which were proved by the event to be in this caſe erroneous, but, in any other than this ſingle caſe of the Chriſtian Religion, would have been juſt and ſound policy, the ſovereigns of the world became perſecutors. The pride of philoſophy too was wounded, by pretenſions to diſcoveries, which were beyond its reach, in ſubjects which had been thought to be the moſt within its province. The philoſophers ranged themſelves on the ſide of the popular ſuperſtition; and the Learning, the Rhetoric, and the Logic of their ſchools were added to the hoſt of adverſaries, to

which the firſt preachers of our Religion found themſelves oppoſed.

It may ſeem, perhaps, at firſt ſight, that our ſituation is, in every particular, the reverſe of this. But it will be found, upon examination, that the change of circumſtances, though much to our advantage, in reſpect to our eaſe and comfort in the preſent world, is ſuch, as not much to leſſen the difficulty of our work, if we would do it well, but rather to render the objects of our policy more complex.

In the firſt place, to take the compariſon in a retrograde order, the treaſures of Philoſophy are very much in our poſſeſſion, and the weapons of Learning in our own hands. In this reſpect we have changed poſition with the enemy. And it is a great matter of policy, firſt to form a true eſtimate of the vaſt importance of this advantage, and then to conſider in what manner it may beſt be uſed.

The vaſt importance of the advantage ariſes from its reference to another circumſtance, of great diſ-

advantage

advantage on our ſide, and lies in this: That it is the only thing we have, to ſet againſt the want of that pre-eminent advantage, which the firſt preachers excluſively enjoyed, the præternatural illumination of their underſtandings by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghoſt. Learning is to us the beſt ſubſtitute, an imperfect ſubſtitute, but the beſt and the only one that is now to be had, and ſufficient no doubt, ſince Providence ſees not fit to ſupply us with any other, for the exigencies of our preſent ſituation; Learning, I ſay, is to us the beſt ſubſtitute for that præternatural illumination of the underſtanding, which was the privilege of the firſt preachers. They were qualified, without any previous ſtudy, for the office to which they were called, becauſe they had that other ſource of fuller and more certain information. But if we enquire, in what particular way, the Holy Spirit, acting upon the underſtanding, gave theſe fiſhermen of Galilee the ſuperiority, which they diſplayed, over the Theology of the Sanhedrim, and the Metaphyſics of the Porch, and the Academy; we ſhall find, if we turn for ſatisfaction upon the queſtion to their writings, we ſhall there find, what we ſhould call, if

the thing had been learnt before, a ready and accurate recollection of the hiſtory of their own nation, and of what was cloſely connected with it, the univerſal antiquities of Religion. Something always preſented to their minds the particular events of antient ſtory, which were moſt directly to the purpoſe of that particular argument, in which they chanced, at any time, to be engaged. We find them happy in applications of the prophecies, able expoſitors of thoſe adumbrations of the ſcheme of Redemption, which were contained in the myſtic rites of the Moſaic Law. We find them learned in the juriſprudence of their country. And in their reaſonings upon the moſt abſtruſe ſubjects, we find a ſelf-evidence of the principles aſſumed, a coherence of the argument purſued, a ſolidity of the concluſion deduced, a juſtneſs of diſtinction, and a perſpicuity of language, not ſurpaſſed by any thing in the ſame kind, in the very beſt of the Greek writers. Whence the concluſion ſeems inevitable, that the knowledge, which the Holy Spirit conveyed to the underſtandings of theſe choſen Inſtruments of God, was the very ſame in kind, conſiſting of the ſame particulars, which, in the ordinary way, is attained, in a more imperfect

imperfect degree, by ſtudy. You will carefully obſerve, my Reverend Brethren, that, when I compare the effect and fruit of ſtudy, with the gift and operation of the Holy Ghoſt; I ſpeak of that operation only, which produced a miraculous information of the underſtanding of the firſt preachers, and chiefly for the purpoſe of controverſy with gainſayers. The ſanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, upon the heart of the Believer, is quite another thing. And though far more general, being indeed univerſal, it is an operation of a much higher order. If ever this influence is withdrawn, the man is loſt. Nothing, within the reach of man's induſtry, can ſupply the want of it. But the miraculous infuſion of knowledge, which was peculiar to the firſt preachers, may be, in ſome degree, ſupplied, certainly in a ſufficient degree for the work of the miniſtry in theſe times, by knowledge acquired in the ordinary way; provided we fail not earneſtly to pray to the Father of Lights, to bleſs our diligence in the purſuit of it, and to turn it to his glory. If therefore it be an object of our policy, to execute our taſk, in a manner that may at all agree with the example of the firſt preachers,

and

and command the reſpect and reverence of the world; a very great proportion of our leiſure, (by our leiſure I mean ſo much of our time as is not engaged in the actual labours of the miniſtry, in preaching the word, adminiſtering the ſacraments, and viſiting the ſick, and in a neceſſary attention to our ſecular concerns), ſo much of a clergyman's time, as is not thus engaged, ſhould be devoted, in the far greater part, to a diligent purſuit of Science and Literature. It is not indeed neceſſary, that every moment of his time ſhould be employed in the immediate ſtudies of the profeſſion: though the profeſſion is an object, of which he never ſhould loſe ſight.—But there is hardly any branch of polite learning, or abſtract ſcience, which may not be made ſubſervient to it, and many are of abſolute neceſſity. A man is not, literally ſpeaking, ſtudying Divinity, when he is learning the grammar of the Hebrew language. But he is acquiring that, which whoever wants, wants, I had almoſt ſaid, an eſſential accompliſhment of a divine. A man may ſeem ſtill farther from the ſtudy of Divinity, when he is learning the elements of the Conic Sections. But he is learning that, without which he never will be a

proficient in Natural Philoſophy; and without ſome good proficiency in Natural Philoſophy, he will be an incompetent expoſitor of many parts of the Bible. It might eaſily be ſhewn, that a Divine will not be the worſe accompliſhed in his profeſſion, for an accurate knowledge of the proportions of architecture, or the diviſions of the muſical chord. I chooſe theſe inſtances, becauſe they are things, which, at firſt ſight, ſeem to relate only to the elegancies of the preſent life. And what I mean to infer is this: that ſince ſo many branches of knowledge are of neceſſity to the Divine; Languages, for inſtance, antient and modern; Hiſtory, antient and modern, ſacred and profane, ſecular and eccleſiaſtical; Ethics; Politics and Juriſprudence, in their general principles; Metaphyſics, and many others, which it were tedious to enumerate; ſince all theſe are neceſſary, and ſince ſo many more, than are of abſolute neceſſity, may be made uſeful; a clergyman is by no means to be ſuppoſed to miſemploy every moment of his time, which is not beſtowed upon the ſtudy of Divinity properly ſo called; but it certainly is his duty, and it will be the beſt Policy of his conduct, under the abſence of

that miraculous infuſed learning, which was peculiar to the firſt ages, to devote his time to a variety of literary purſuits. He will pay due attention to his ordination vow; he will give himſelf wholly to his office, as his principal buſineſs, and will draw all his cares and ſtudies that way; and, under the influence and regulation of this principle, there is hardly any branch of learning, or of ſcience, on which ſome portion of his time may not laudably, and profitably for himſelf, and for the Church of God, be beſtowed.

I muſt indeed diſtinctly make exception of one ſtudy, if ſtudy it may be called, which has lately begun to come into credit with the younger clergy; which my imagination cannot in the remoteſt degree connect with the buſineſs of our profeſſion, nor reconcile the purſuit of it with the good Policy of a clergyman's conduct. It is become the practice, among many of the younger clergy, to ſhut up their books, when they quit the univerſity; and to think no more of literature, ſacred or profane. The practice is too manifeſt to be denied. For they who are to be found in every ſeaſon of the year,

and

and at every hour of the day, in circles of diſſipation (and every ſeaſon and every hour has now its appropriate amuſement), are not likely to be found at any time in their ſtudies. Their defence is, that although they read but little, nothing indeed beyond a review or magazine, they are engaged in a moſt edifying ſtudy. They tell us gravely, they are *ſtudying men*. And the knowledge of man, they ſay, is infinitely more uſeful than that of books; and muſt be of particular importance to thoſe, who, by profeſſion, are the teachers of mankind.

My Reverend Brethren, the philoſophical knowledge of Man, that laſt work of the Creator, that wonderful compound of Brute Matter, of Life, the Vegetable and the Animal, of Soul, and of Intellect, the knowledge of the ſtructure and mechaniſm of this creature's Body, of its mental Faculties, of its Paſſions and its Appetites; how its Paſſions and its Appetites modify its Faculties; of the mixed ſway of Appetite and Judgement over its Actions: this knowledge of Man forms indeed a ſcience of the higheſt curioſity and of the firſt importance.

Of particular importance to the Divine, as it is nearly connected with that, which is his proper province; the knowledge of this creature's fallen ſtate, and of the means provided for its recovery. But this knowledge of man is not to be acquired without much abſtract ſtudy, and intenſe application. It is beſt acquired by thoſe, who add to much retired meditation of the ſubject accurate obſervation of what is paſſing in the world; and, in a mixed life of buſineſs and ſpeculation, have opportunity to notice the natural ſpring and play of the talents and paſſions of man, in all the variety of combinations, in which they are exhibited upon the world's vaſt theatre. It is never to be picked up in the giddy rounds of folly. It is not to be acquired, by an inceſſant attendance in ſcenes of diſſipated pleaſure; where every man's ſpecific character, if he has any, is obliterated in the gaiety of the moment; and, except in thoſe infamous nocturnal revels, in which clergymen, it is hoped, never mix, infamous though held in private families of no mean diſtinction, where the paſſions are kept upon the rack by the viciſſitudes of play, nothing is called forth to meet the obſerver's eye, but what theſe

Students

Students of Men need not ſtir from home to find, a certain inſipid good-humoured inſignificance of character; habitual to the majority of ſuch aſſemblies, and induced, for the moment, in thoſe of better habits.

So far as it has fallen in my way to obſerve the good effects of this ſtudy of men, they amount not certainly to what thoſe, who addict themſelves to the purſuit, tell us we might expect from it. I have never perceived, among theſe juvenile Divines, any extraordinary unction in the uſual ſtrain of their preaching; nor have I diſcovered any thing more ſeemly, in the faſhion of their lives, than the common poliſh of good breeding. Of all that wear the garb of clergymen, they have certainly the leaſt about them either of the Policy of the Serpent, or of the Harmleſsneſs of the Dove. And if the taſte for this ſtudy of men, with a neglect of books, and the true ſtudy of men, ſhould become general among our younger Brethren, (which God avert!) the enemy in the next generation would be likely to regain the advantageous poſt, we have for many centuries maintained.

When

When the Chriſtian Preacher of the preſent times has made a juſt eſtimate of the importance of Human Learning, to the accompliſhment of his character; the next object of his Policy is to conſider the manner, in which it is to be uſed. This ſubject embraces ſo great a variety of matter, that I cannot, upon the preſent occaſion, engage in the diſcuſſion of it in all its parts. I ſhall confine myſelf to a ſingle point, which I conceive to be of great importance, and take the liberty to give you my opinion, in what manner Metaphyſical Learning in particular may be employed to ſerve the cauſe of Religion. For I have long been convinced, that, by a miſuſe of it, it has actually done upon the whole more harm than good. Now the ſafeſt rule, by which a Chriſtian Divine may conduct himſelf in metaphyſical reſearches, or in the uſe of metaphyſical arguments (reſearches which I would by no means diſſuade, arguments which I would not be thought to undervalue) the ſafeſt rule I take to be this: that he never allow himſelf to philoſophize, or at leaſt to draw concluſions in theology upon philoſophical reaſonings, without his Bible. He may inveſtigate---he may divide, compound, and hypothetically draw

concluſions.

concluſions. But then, for a certain teſt of the truth of the concluſions ſo drawn, " to the Word and " to the Teſtimony." If they are not confirmed by that, " there is no light in them." In every thing relating to God, to the Origin of Evil, to a Future State, he muſt diveſt himſelf of all the pride of philoſophy, and implicitly reſign his underſtanding to the authority of the written word. He is not to ſuppoſe, that, in theſe ſubjects, he can diſcover certain firſt principles by the natural ſtrength of his own mind, and that he is at liberty to adjuſt the ſenſe of the ſcriptures to theſe principles of his own. It has been much the practice, with ſome of our Metaphyſical Divines, to talk of Natural Religion and Revealed Religion, as if they were diſtinct; and as if the former were the neceſſary foundation of the latter. As if men, by their natural talents, had made certain diſcoveries of religious truths, before Revelation came: and Revelation had only made additional diſcoveries, in the ſame ſubject: and that for the right apprehenſion of theſe additions, thoſe antecedent diſcoveries, of reaſon and nature, muſt be well underſtood.

Now

Now it is very true, that many of the firſt principles of Religion are capable of ſcientific proof. Such in my judgement are the immateriality, the omnipreſence, and eternity of the Deity. The immateriality of the human ſoul, the natural immortality of the ſoul, and the probability of a future retribution, when the things have once been mentioned, may be made evident to man's natural reaſon. There are other particulars in the doctrines of Revelation, which if they are not to be received upon the authority of the Revelation, or if the teſtimony of Revelation ſhould be loſt, are incapable of any proof to men at all. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of Atonement, and Grace. Now, if we are to ſeparate thoſe parts of the revealed doctrine, which are the eaſieſt to man's natural apprehenſion, from the more difficult, and chooſe to call that aſſent, which the mind may give to the firſt, merely as inference from argument, without regard to the teſtimony afforded by Revelation, and without any knowledge of the reſt of the revealed doctrine; if we are to call this Natural Religion: I wiſh the name had never been introduced, becauſe it has given occaſion to miſtakes;

but the diſtinction may be of uſe, and it is not worth while to diſpute about the name, when the thing is underſtood. More or leſs of Natural Religion, in this ſenſe of the words, was to be found among the Heathen in all ages. But if it is implied, in this name of Natural Religion, that the very plaineſt of theſe truths was the diſcovery of Man's own reaſon, before any Revelation had been made; I ſcruple not to deny, that any thing of a Natural Religion, in this ſenſe of the words, a Religion of Man's own diſcovery (though you reduce it to the moſt ſimple principles) either now exiſts, or was ever to be found, in any part of the world. If we believe the Sacred Hiſtory, the viſible intercourſe of the Creator with our firſt parents, commenced with their exiſtence, and was graciouſly continued with their poſterity, before and after the flood, for ſeveral ages. The firſt revelations therefore were antecedent to any poſſible date of theſe pretended diſcoveries of Reaſon: and from theſe early Revelations came whatever we find, of what is called Natural Religion, among the Heathen. Some of the firſt principles of theſe revelations laid ſtrong hold upon the minds of men, and were traditionally remembered, when

not only all the reſt, but even the manner, by which the knowledge of what was remembered firſt came into the world, was gone into utter oblivion. Theſe traditional fragments, of the creed of the protoplaſt and the patriarchs, made what is called the Natural Religion of the Heathen of antient times. And whatever notions of God, and of a future ſtate, are to be found, at this day, among ſavages, are to be referred to the ſame ſource. Reaſon, whatever its abilities may be, was never left to itſelf, to try its ſtrength, in original diſcovery, in theſe ſubjects. In argument indeed, upon principles given, its ſtrength was tried. It was left to itſelf, for many ages, to make the moſt of the few principles remembered. And much it made of them in theory; nothing at all, in practice. It was not unnatural for the Heathen to imagine, that they had been the diſcoverers of thoſe truths, which they found they could prove. But the concluſion, that Reaſon was equal to the firſt diſcovery of theſe principles, becauſe it can ſyllogize about them when propounded, is precarious. It is one thing, to perceive the truth of a propoſition, once offered to the mind; and quite another, for the mind to ſuggeſt the propoſition to itſelf.

itſelf. And the queſtion, in this caſe, is not abſtract; what Reaſon may have the ability to do? The queſtion is upon a matter of fact; what ſhe did? Were theſe things, in point of fact, Man's own diſcovery? The Sacred Hiſtory is explicit, that they were not. And notwithſtanding the many uſeful leſſons of Morality we find in the writings of the Heathen Sages; the many eloquent diſcourſes upon Providence, and the immortality of the Soul; the many ſubtle diſquiſitions upon the great queſtions of Neceſſity, and Moral Freedom; upon Fate, and Chance; I am perſuaded, that, had it not been for the early communications of the Creator with mankind, Man never would have raiſed the conceptions of his mind to the idea of a God; he never would have dreamed of the immaterial principle within himſelf, and he never would have formed any genetal notions of Right and Wrong in the abſtract. He would have had no Religion---perhaps no Morality. Revealed Religion therefore ſtands not upon the ground of any antecedent diſcoveries of Natural Reaſon; and it is highly impolitic, to attempt to place it upon any ſuch falſe foundation. By itſelf it muſt ſtand, or fall. It is in itſelf the Firſt and the

Laſt; the Beginning, and the End. The prudent diſpenſer of the word will reſort to Revelation, for his firſt principles, as well as for more myſterious truths. He will not truſt to Philoſophy, for any diſcoveries. He will ſuffer Philoſophy to be nothing more, than his aſſiſtant in the ſtudy of the inſpired word. She muſt herſelf be inſtructed by thoſe lively oracles, before ſhe can be qualified to take part, in the inſtruction of men. To lay the foundation of Revelation upon any previous diſcoveries of Reaſon, is in fact to make Reaſon the ſuperior teacher. It is not improbable, that Idolatry itſelf had its firſt beginning, in an early adoration of this phantom of Natural Religion, the Idol, in later ages, of impolitic Metaphyſical Divines.

A ſecond circumſtance, in which our ſituation may ſeem the very reverſe of that of the firſt preachers, is that we are not perſecuted; we are protected, honoured, and careſſed, by the Sovereigns of the world. This indeed, at preſent, is our ſituation, in the far greater part of Europe. Would God, this ſtate of things might be perpetual. But we ſhall do well to remember, that it is otherwiſe

ordained.

ordained. The prophecies of the New Teſtament foretell, that in the latter days perilous times will come. Times of grievous and general perſecution. The ſeaſon of ſuffering will bring indeed this conſolation with it, whenever it ſhall arrive, that it is to terminate in the final peace and triumph of the Church. The ſigns of the times are ſuch, as may create an apprehenſion, that the hour of trial is not far diſtant. Certainly that, in leſs than ſeven years, a general perſecution of the Chriſtian name may be raging in every part of Europe, is far leſs improbable, in the preſent moment; than the tragical cataſtrophe of the church of France was, a twelvemonth before it happened. It is our Policy therefore, in theſe times, not to be high-minded and ſecure, but to fear. To think ſeriouſly before hand, to what we may be called. To meditate on the glory, that awaits thoſe, who ſhall endure unto the end; and the ſhame, that will light on thoſe, who ſhall fall away. To pray for the ſuccour of God's Grace, to ſupport us in the hard conflict. If it ſhall pleaſe God, in his Mercy, ſo to direct the ſtorm, that it come not nigh our dwelling, it will not harm us to have been prepared. Perhaps a

ſerious

ſerious devout preparation for the worſt is the moſt likely means to avert the calamity, or at leaſt to ſhorten its duration.

It may ſeem again, that our ſituation is almoſt the reverſe of that of the firſt Chriſtians, with reſpect to the ſetting of the ſtream of Vulgar Prejudice. The world, our weſtern world at leaſt, for ſeveral ages, has been Chriſtian. And thoſe, who exerciſe the miniſtry in a country, where, as in this, Chriſtianity has taken root, have not to encounter any attachment of the people to any other religion, in preference to the Chriſtian; Popular Opinion, in this inſtance, is, fortunately for us, on the ſide of truth.

The advantage of our ſituation, in this reſpect, when it comes to be examined, will not be found ſo great, as it may at firſt ſeem. It is very true, that we have not to contend with any prejudice of mankind in general, in favour of a religion different from our own. The ſingularity of the times is, that there are no prejudices in favour of any religion. But we have to encounter a malignant averſion, of

ſome part of the people, to every thing that carries the name of Religion; ariſing, from that ferocious impatience of reſtraint, and thoſe mad notions of liberty, which the fiend of French Democracy, the moſt wicked hateful fiend, which Providence hath ever made the inſtrument of his wrath upon guilty nations, hath, within the laſt ſix years, ſpredde throughout all Europe. The diſmal ſcenes that have taken place in France; the miſery in which that people was inſtantly plunged, upon the overthrow of their auguſt monarchy, and their venerable church eſtabliſhment; the ſanguinary violence, under which they have ever ſince groaned; have proved, I believe, a uſeful warning to this country. The example has damped the riſing ſpirit of Jacobiniſm among us; and, with the ſpirit of Jacobiniſm, it has damped the ſpirit of Irreligion. For theſe are Twin Furies, which cannot have a ſeparate exiſtence. They are damped in ſuch a degree, that I believe the enemies either of our conſtitutional monarchy, or of our church, are at preſent, in proportion to the general body of the people, very few. I fear, however, that we are not to conclude, that all, who are not Jacobins, are conſcientiouſly, or otherwiſe than politically,

attached

attached to the eſtabliſhed church, or even to the general cauſe of Chriſtianity. I believe, the Laity of this country may be divided, with reſpect to their religious ſentiments, into three claſſes. Thoſe of the firſt claſs, which I would hope, and do indeed believe, makes a very great majority of the whole people, are Chriſtians; not in name only and profeſſion, but in conſcience and in truth. Another very ſmall claſs is compoſed of the Democratiſts---void of all religion, and avowed enemies to its miniſters. Theſe are few, as I have ſaid, in number; but they are loud in their invectives, and indefatigably buſy in their machinations, againſt all government civil and eccleſiaſtical. Between theſe two, there is a middle claſs: which may be called the claſs of the Moraliſts. Reſpectable, ſerious men. But men who have never ſet themſelves to think ſeriouſly about the intrinſic importance of Religion, or the evidences of the truth and reality of Revelation; and, being of a turn of mind not to take things upon truſt, have rather perhaps a ſecret leaning to ſpeculative infidelity. They are friends however to Religion, for its good ſervices in civil life. But, ſeeing nothing more in it, they would always take up

with

with the religion which they find eſtabliſhed, and, upon that principle, they unite themſelves, in profeſſion, to the eſtabliſhed church. They have perhaps, beſides, ſomething of a reſpect, in preference, for Chriſtianity, on account of the purity of its moral precepts, and the importance of the doctrine of retribution, which it aſſerts. They have a reſpect in preference for the reformed Churches, as maintaining the pureſt form of Chriſtianity; and they have a reſpect, in preference, for the Church of England in particular, as the moſt conſiderable among the reformed. Now, of the people of this middle claſs, we may ſay, that "ſo long as we do "well unto ourſelves, theſe men will ſpeak good of "us." At preſent they are our friends. They conſider us, however, as perſons ſet to act a part. They are our friends, becauſe they think the part we act eſſential to the good of the community. But, that being the ground of their friendſhip, they will be our friends no longer, than while we act it well. They conſider the emoluments and privileges of the order, as a pay that we receive from the public, for the performance of the part aſſigned us. And if they diſcover in us (and none will be more ſharp-

ſighted to diſcover) any negligence in the execution; diſtant as they are in principle from the Democratiſts, they will be very apt to concur with them, one time or another, in ſome goodly project for the confiſcation of our property, and the abolition of our privileges.

It is a very important object of our Policy, to retain the friendſhip and good opinion of this middle claſs, and to improve it what we can. And the means, which an upright policy will ſuggeſt, are very obvious. We have only to take care, that we adorn the doctrine of our Saviour by the example of our lives; and, moſt of all, that we ſhew, by diligence in the miniſtry, that our hearts and affections are ſeriouſly engaged in it. This conduct will attach to us the affections of our flocks; it will ſecure the friendſhip of the moraliſts; and it will probably baffle, if it ſhould not mitigate, the malice of our enemies. But a contrary conduct, any thing of ſloth, or lukewarmneſs, in the labours of the miniſtry, any thing that may ſhew more greedineſs of the gains of our office, than concern for the duties of it, will ſcandalize the Church of God, and give a handle

handle to our enemies, and perhaps may provoke God to employ the fire of perſecution, to purge away the droſs.

The conduct of the clergy of the Church of England, for ſome years paſt, in one particular, has not been exactly what their friends might wiſh, and an upright policy, attentive to the intereſts of the order, as well as to the duties of the profeſſion, would recommend. I ſpeak of the very general practice, among the beneficed clergy, of non-reſidence, and, what neceſſarily reſults from it, a very inſufficient performance of Parochial Duty. Nothing has ſo much leſſened the general influence of the clergy. Nothing ſo much threatens the ſtability of the national church. The evil of non-reſidence is much greater upon Livings of ſmall value, than upon the more productive. If the revenues of a non-reſident are narrow, he can make but a ſcanty allowance to his curate. The curate, finding the ſalary of one curacy inſufficient for his maintenance, is reduced to the neceſſity of taking a ſecond. He ſerves, as it is called, at leaſt two pariſhes; and the conſe-

quence is, that divine ſervice is performed but once each Lord's day, in either church: in the forenoon and evening, perhaps, in the two alternately. The curate, in many caſes, reſides in neither of the pariſhes, which he is ſaid to ſerve; and, if his attendance be wanted on the dying, or the ſick, or baptiſm is ſuddenly to be adminiſtered to an infant in danger of death, he is not eaſily to be found.

I am well aware, that many non-reſidents are conſcientiouſly engaged, in various ways, in promoting the general cauſe of Chriſtianity; and are perhaps doing better ſervice, than if they confined themſelves to the ordinary labours of the miniſtry, in a country pariſh. It would be no leſs impolitic, than harſh, to call perſons, ſo employed, to reſidence. I am well aware, that non-reſidence may often have a juſt excuſe in conſiderations of another kind, and muſt, in ſuch caſes, be connived at. I muſt, however, declare, that I acknowledge no connivance to be due, and, as far as my own authority extends, I will ſhew no connivance, to the non-reſidence of the younger clergy, who abſent themſelves from their

pariſhes,

pariſhes, for no better purpoſe than " to ſtudy " men," in the manner in which that delightful ſtudy is uſually purſued by them.

But however juſtifiable non-reſidence may be in many caſes; the non-reſident, in all caſes, is at leaſt bound in conſcience to do to the utmoſt, by another, all that which he does not by himſelf. It is his duty, to maintain a reſident curate, with ſuch a ſtipend, if the revenues of the Living will afford it, as may ſupply the curate with a decent maintenance, without his engaging in a ſecond cure, and doing but half the duty of both pariſhes. If the revenues of the Living will not afford this proviſion for the curate, there muſt be ſomething very ſingular in the caſe indeed, to juſtify either the Incumbent's non-reſidence, or the Biſhop's connivance at it. The Curate ſhould be nominated to the Biſhop, to be licenſed by him, for two reaſons; both becauſe this is the ſureſt way to guard againſt the admiſſion of improper perſons, and becauſe, in every pariſh, the perſon exerciſing the miniſtry ought to be completely amenable to the eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction.

I am not ſingular in the opinion I entertain, that the preſent omiſſion of Parochial Duty is a great want of Policy in the conduct of the clergy, and threatens the Eſtabliſhed Church with the greateſt danger. The ſize and growth of the evil has been thought of ſufficient importance, to engage the attention of the legiſlature. In a late period of the laſt parliament, a Bill was introduced in the houſe of Lords, upon the motion of the Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury, and has been paſſed into a law, providing certainly the gentleſt remedy that could be deviſed. It generally goes by the name of "The Curate's Act." But the title of it is, "An Act for the further Support "and Maintenance of Curates within the Church of "England, and for making certain Regulations "reſpecting the Appointment of ſuch Curates, and "the Admiſſion of Perſons to Cures augmented by "Queen Anne's Bounty, with reſpect to the Avoid-"ance of other Benefices." It paſſed almoſt in ſilence through the Upper Houſe of Parliament. For as the general expedience of the meaſure was univerſally allowed, and the bill was originally drawn with the aſſiſtance of one of the greateſt living ornaments of the Bench of Juſtice; and the clauſes of it had

had been long under the conſideration of the Biſhops; and had been reviſed and digeſted by the firſt practitioners, both in the ſecular and the eccleſiaſtical courts; there was nothing to occaſion debate in its progreſs through the Houſe of Lords. In the Lower Houſe it received ſome alterations; but none but what were conſiſtent with the general ſpirit and purview of the bill, and ſuch as, upon the whole, may be deemed amendments. Having reaſon to think that this bill is not well underſtood among the clergy, and feeling that it will be the duty of every Biſhop to enforce it, I ſhall detain you ſome little time longer, to explain to you briefly the principal proviſions of it.

It is certainly, both by the Canon Law, and the Statute Law, the province of the Biſhop of the Dioceſe to aſſign the ſtipends of the curates of non-reſidents. The ſcantineſs of their ſtipends is a great aggravation, as I have explained at large, of the miſchief of non-reſidence. This appears to have been a complaint of long ſtanding; for ſo early, in this century, as the 12th of Queen Anne, we have an act "For the better Maintenance of Curates." This

act

act confines the diſcretion of the Biſhop, between the limits of £ 20, as the leaſt annual ſtipend to be granted, and £ 50, as the greateſt. It was probably a great relief to the curates at the time, that they could not be paid with leſs than £ 20 *per annum*, and might have any thing between £ 20 and £ 50, at the diſcretion of the Biſhop. But in the preſent times, this ſtatute of Queen Anne, by the change of the expences of living, was become a hardſhip upon the curates. For it is evident, that, in all caſes, in which £ 50 was not too much in the reign of Queen Anne, it would be greatly too little now. And yet it was the utmoſt ſtipend the Biſhop, in any caſe, could grant. The conſequence was, that the Biſhop often thought it the beſt thing to be done for the Curate, to leave him to the liberality of the Incumbent, and to connive at his officiating without a licence. And this was a great blow upon the diſcipline of the church. The new ſtatute has enlarged the limit of the Biſhop's diſcretion, carrying it to £ 75 *per annum*, in the ſhape of ſtipend, beſides other emoluments, which I ſhall mention more particularly in their proper place.

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I have underſtood, that ſome non-reſidents, with ſmall benefices, have taken alarm; as if the ſtipend, of every curate in the kingdom, was forthwith to be raiſed to £75 *per annum*, be the living great or ſmall. But no ſuch abſurdity is to be found, either in the ſpirit, or in the letter, of the act. The Biſhop is empowered to give £75, when he thinks fit. He is in no caſe empowered to grant more; and he is in no caſe compelled to give ſo much. The *minimum* remains, where the ſtatute of Queen Anne fixes it, at £20. And by this ſtatute of Queen Anne, which, you will obſerve, is not repealed, but is ſtill in force, except ſo far as it is altered by this new ſtatute, the Biſhop is admoniſhed, in aſſigning the ſtipend of the Curate, "to have regard to the "greatneſs of the cure, and the value of the eccle-"ſiaſtical benefice."

At the ſame time it muſt be diſtinctly underſtood, that although regard is to be had to the value of the benefice; yet, if £75 *per annum* be conſidered, as the greateſt ſtipend to be allowed out of the greateſt living; the incumbents, upon poorer livings, are not to expect, that the ſtipends of their curates will

be leſs, in exact geometrical proportion to the leſs value of the benefice. No ſuch rule can be adopted. For obſerve only, to what an abſurdity it would lead. Let us ſuppoſe, that, upon a living of £750 *per annum*, a ſtipend is aſſigned to the curate of the non-reſident incumbent of £75; which is the moſt that can be aſſigned, though the annual value of the benefice were twice £750. The incumbent of the adjoining pariſh, we will ſuppoſe, is alſo a non-reſident; but his living ſhall be worth but £100 *per annum*. He comes therefore to the Biſhop, and he ſays, "You have aſſigned my neighbour's curate "£75 *per annum*, which is juſt one-tenth of the annual "income of the living; for his living renders a "clear annual income of £750. My living pro-"duces but £100 *per annum*. Therefore, by the Rule "of Three, my curate muſt be paid with £10." I ſhould certainly pay no great attention to this concluſion, had the law left me at liberty; which it has not done, having fixed a *minimum*. And yet, it is the true concluſion from this principle of proportion; which, becauſe it leads to ſuch impracticable concluſions, cannot be adopted. The truth is, that this is one of innumerable caſes, in which the

greater

greater burthen, in proportion, muſt fall upon the ſmaller income. It is well, in this caſe, that it does. Becauſe it magnifies, what every friend to the church muſt wiſh to ſee magnified, the inconvenience, to the beneficed clergy, of non-reſidence upon ſmall livings. It magnifies this inconvenience, juſt as it ought to be magnified; that is to ſay, in proportion to the ſmallneſs of the living.

A more ſpecious objection to this clauſe has been ſtarted, as I have heard, on the part of the curates. It has been ſaid for them, that if it was the intention of the legiſlature, that their condition ſhould be rendered now, juſt what it was intended to be, in former times, under the ſtatute of Queen Anne; the diſcretionary power of the Biſhop ſhould have been extended to £.150, rather than ſtopped at £75. For the increaſe of the expence of life, ſince the time of Queen Anne, has been at leaſt in the proportion of one to three. I believe the eſtimate may be tolerably accurate; that is to ſay, I believe, that £150 *per annum*, in the preſent time, will not purchaſe more of the conveniencies of life, than £50 *per annum* would have purchaſed in the time of

Queen Anne. But the claim of an advance of the ſtipend, in this full proportion, is beyond all meaſure of reaſon and equity, and is not to be endured. For the plain juſtice of the caſe is this. The increaſe of the neceſſary articles of expence, is an evil, which ought to fall, in even proportions, upon all ranks of the community, and upon all incomes. Thoſe therefore, who ſubſiſt upon the ſalary of a ſervice, have no equitable claim to an increaſe of ſalary, proportional to the increaſed price of the articles of life; unleſs they can allege, that the funds, from which the ſalary is to proceed, are increaſed in the ſame proportion; which is notoriouſly not the caſe of eccleſiaſtical benefices. To increaſe the ſalary in this full proportion, the incomes of thoſe who pay it being not ſo increaſed, would be to exempt the perſon, receiving ſalary, from his whole ſhare of the burthen of the increaſe of expences, and to throw both ſhares upon the perſon paying it. And the equity of this I cannot underſtand. A more reaſonable demand would be, that the increaſe of the ſtipend ſhould be in proportion to the average improvement of the revenues of Eccleſiaſtical Benefices. And I very much queſtion,

whether

whether this improvement, ſince the time of Queen Anne, upon the average of all the livings in the kingdom, improved and unimproved, has been more than in the proportion of three to two; with which, it happens, that the proportion of the riſe of ſtipend (to 75 from 50) exactly correſponds. But the truth is, that neither of theſe proportions, of increaſed expence, or improved value, was diſtinctly in contemplation, in the framing of the Bill. The intention was ſimply this; to do as much, as could be done, for the curates, without impoſing an exceſſive burthen upon the beneficed clergy. And both parties, I truſt, will find, that they have reaſon to be ſatisfied.

In addition to this £75 *per annum*, at the utmoſt, granted in the ſhape of ſtipend, the Biſhop, or Ordinary, by this ſame clauſe, is inveſted with a diſcretionary power, of aſſigning to the curate, if the incumbent be not perſonally reſident upon his living four months in the year at leaſt, "the uſe "of the rectory or vicarage houſe, and the garden "and ſtable thereunto belonging." The grant is to be by writing, under hand and ſeal of the Biſhop

or

or Ordinary, for twelve calendar months only, but with power in the Biſhop, or Ordinary, to renew the grant from time to time. In caſe there ſhould be no houſe upon the living, or the Biſhop or Ordinary ſhould not deem it convenient to allot and aſſign the ſame to the curate, he is authorized to aſſign to the curate, in lieu of ſuch houſe, garden and ſtable, a further ſum, not exceeding £15 *per annum*, over and above the ſtipend of £75. A proviſo is added, that "the ſaid houſe, garden, and ſtable ſhall be for the "uſe of the ſaid curate and his family only, during "his actual reſidence in the ſaid rectory and vicarage "houſe."

This power, of granting the uſe of the houſe to the curate, has raiſed great murmurs, as I am informed, among the beneficed clergy in ſome places. They argue againſt it thus: "It is not for our advantage, that the curate ſhould have the houſe. "The moſt that can be ſaved to us, by the allotment "of the houſe to his uſe, is £15 *per annum*; with "the payment of which, at the utmoſt, we may "be charged, if the houſe, with garden and ſtable, "be not allotted. But leave us to chooſe our own "tenants, and we ſhall often let our houſes upon

"much

" much better terms." Thoſe, who argue, in this manner, againſt the equity of the clauſe, are certainly not aware, that the letting of a rectorial or vicarage houſe, to any other perſon but the curate, was an illegal act, before this ſtatute paſſed; poſitively forbidden, under heavy penalties, by the ſtatute-law, ſo long ſince as the reign of Elizabeth. Such houſes were not intended to ſwell the emoluments of non-reſident incumbents, but to afford a comfortable and convenient manſion for the officiating miniſters; which, in many places, would not be to be found at all, if a houſe were not appropriated. And for this reaſon, and to diſcourage non-reſidence, non-reſidents are reſtrained, by ſtatutes of Elizabeth, at firſt temporary, but ſince made perpetual, from leaſing any part of the benefice (and the houſe is a very principal part of it) except to the curate only, and to him in particular caſes only. The non-reſident therefore, by this power over the houſe granted to the Biſhop, is not reſtrained, in the freedom of any thing he could legally do, before this act was paſſed; and the comfort of the curate, and the facility of his attendance on parochial duties, are very materially promoted by it.

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I underſtand very well, that, in many caſes, it might be a great hardſhip to an incumbent, not totally non-reſident, that the uſe of the houſe ſhould be allotted to the curate, though the incumbent's reſidence ſhould not uſually amount to ſo much, as four months in the year. I underſtand beſides, that in certain caſes, the letting of the houſe to other than the curate, though not ſtrictly legal, might be very properly connived at. But you will remember, that the Biſhop has the power of the alternative, to allot the uſe of the houſe, or to grant an addition of ſtipend in lieu of it. And I cannot but ſuppoſe, that, in the exerciſe of this diſcretionary power, the Biſhop will attend to the circumſtances of every caſe, and conſult the convenience of both parties.

By the following clauſe, the Biſhop is empowered to inſert, in the grant of the houſe, garden, and ſtable, "ſuch terms and conditions to be obſerved on "the part of the curate as he ſhall think reaſonable" —to revoke the grant of the whole or any part of the premiſes, by writing under his hand and ſeal, at any time. And heavy penalties are impoſed upon the curate, if he ſhall refuſe "peaceably to deliver

"up

" up the poſſeſſion of the premiſes granted to him " at the expiration, or other ſooner determination, " of the grant thereof." The power, of inſerting, conditions in the grant, is in aid of the proviſo, at the end of the preceding clauſe; to reſtrain the curate from making any other uſe of the premiſes, than for the reſidence of himſelf and his family: to reſtrain him from the admiſſion of improper inmates; from making alterations in the premiſes, granted for his own accommodation, to the prejudice of the eſtate: to provide for the care of any articles of furniture, which the incumbent may think proper to leave in the houſe; and for many other things, which may become the ſubject of ſuch conditions, in which, it will be much for the accommodation of both parties, that the Biſhop ſhould have authority to interfere. One is unwilling to ſuppoſe the caſe of a litigious curate. But laws muſt ſuppoſe, and muſt provide againſt, all poſſible caſes. It would be a great hardſhip upon the incumbent, if he could not get poſſeſſion of his own houſe, for his own uſe, even with the Biſhop's conſent and approbation, without the expence and delay of a writ in ejectment. The power of revo-

cation, given to the Biſhop, and the neceſſity laid upon the curate, of peaceably delivering up poſſeſſion, ſecure the incumbent againſt this inconvenience. The penalties upon the curate have been thought enormous. But it is to be remembered, that the caſe in contemplation, in theſe proviſions, is ſuch, as, I hope, will hardly ever happen; but if it ſhould ever happen, it is a caſe, in which moderate penalties would have no effect. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that the Biſhop will ever ſuffer an abrupt expulſion of a curate, without reaſonable notice, from the houſe in which his family is ſettled. But on the other hand, it would be hard, if the incumbent had not a more ſummary remedy, againſt the obſtinacy and caprice of a litigious temper, than the ordinary forms of law afford.

The next clauſe, which is the third, in the latter part of it, gives the Biſhop, and the Ordinary, the ſame diſcretionary power of aſſigning the ſtipends of the officiating curates, in perpetual cures, augmented by Queen Anne's bounty, as are given to them, by the two former clauſes, in the caſe of beneſices preſentative. And the fifth clauſe extends

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thoſe powers, under the like limitations, and with the like remedies, to the caſe of officiating curates in perpetual cures not augmented: for this very good reaſon, aſſigned in the preamble of the clauſe, that "many ſuch perpetual curacies, although not "augmented by the bounty of Queen Anne, have "nevertheleſs become conſiderable, in value, by "the improvement of the tithes or glebe, of which "they happen to be endowed, or by other circum-"ſtances."

The ſixth clauſe of the act gives a power to the Biſhop, or the Ordinary, which neither is ſuppoſed to have poſſeſſed before: and of which the beneficed clergy, in ſome places, are ſaid to have expreſſed much jealouſy. The Biſhop's power of appointing the curate's ſtipend, under the ſtatute of Queen Anne, was in effect confined to curates licenſed by the Biſhop, upon the nomination of the incumbent. For it is enacted, "that if any Rector or Vicar, "having cure of ſouls, ſhould, after the 29th day "of September, 1714, *nominate and preſent* any "Curate to the Biſhop or Ordinary, to be licenſed "or admitted to ſerve the cure of ſuch rector or

" vicar, the ſaid Biſhop or Ordinary, and ſo forth, " ſhall appoint a ſufficient certain ſtipend or allow- " ance, &c." And again: " and if it ſhall appear " to the Biſhop, or Ordinary, upon complaint or " otherwiſe, that any Curate of ſuch Rector or " Vicar, *licenſed or admitted* before the 29th of " September, 1714, had not a ſufficient mainte- " nance, it ſhall be lawful for the ſaid Biſhop, &c. " to appoint him a certain ſtipend, &c." The enacting words, you ſee, are ſuch, as confine the power of the Biſhop, though the thing, probably, was not intended, to curates nominated by rectors or vicars, in order to be licenſed, or already licenſed, under ſuch nomination. Incumbents (for a reaſon which I ſhall mention preſently) have, for many years paſt, been very unwilling, that their curates ſhould be licenſed. They have been averſe to a nomination of their curates. Few curates have been nominated. Few have been licenſed. Few ſtipends have been fixed by the diſcretion of the Biſhop or Ordinary. And thus, for many years paſt, the ſtatute of Queen Anne, as far as it relates to this matter, has been a mere dead letter.

In the preſent ſtatute, great care has been taken to avoid the error of our anceſtors, and to uſe ſuch enacting words, from beginning to end, as might embrace all thoſe caſes, which evaded the operation of the former act. By the third and fifth clauſes, whatever diſcretionary power is given to the Biſhop and Ordinary, with reſpect to the ſtipends of the curates of rectors and vicars, is extended to the ſtipends of clergymen officiating as curates, under the incumbents upon thoſe livings, which are called Perpetual Curacies. And thus the operation of the act is extended to all incumbents, whether rectors or vicars, or perpetual curates only. But beſides this, in the firſt clauſe, the enacting words, by which the Biſhop or Ordinary is empowered to appoint the quantum of ſtipend, are theſe; "That it "ſhall and may be lawful for the Biſhop or Ordi- "dinary to appoint under his hand and ſeal any "ſtipend or allowance for any curate heretofore "nominated *or employed*, or hereafter to be nomi- "nated *or employed*," &c. And in every ſubſequent part of the act, in the deſcription of the curate, whoſe ſtipend the Biſhop or Ordinary is empowered to appoint, the words, "or employed," are conſtantly

ſtantly added to the word, " nominated." Or elſe (as in the fifth clauſe) the word, " employed," is uſed alone, and the word, " nominated," is omitted. And by this form of the enacting words, the operation of the act is extended to all curates, or *quaſi-curates*, if that expreſſion may be allowed, to deſcribe perſons employed as curates, but not nominated. For if a perſon be *employed* as a curate, upon any rectory, vicarage, or perpetual curacy, though he hath not been nominated, and is not licenſed, the Biſhop or Ordinary, as theſe clauſes are expreſſed, hath full power to appoint him a ſtipend, and to compel payment of the ſtipend appointed, in a ſummary way.

This however was not thought ſufficient. The authority of the Biſhop, to appoint the curate's ſtipend, ſeemed a matter of too much importance to be truſted to conſtructions of words, that might be in the leaſt degree uncertain, or to the diſtinction, very familiar to lawyers, but, as may appear by the inaccurate comments upon this ſtatute, which are already in print and in circulation, eaſily overlooked by others; the diſtinction between the copulative " and," and

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the disjunctive " or." This ſixth clauſe therefore was added, which puts the matter out of all doubt, expreſsly taking away from the incumbent, the option, which the ſtatute of Queen Anne had inadvertently left with him, whether his curate ſhould be licenſed, or no. This ſixth clauſe gives a power to the ordinary " to licenſe any curate who is, or " ſhall be actually employed by the rector, vicar, " or other incumbent of any pariſh church or " chapel, although no expreſs nomination of ſuch " curate ſhall have been made, either in words or " in writing to the ordinary by the ſaid rector, " vicar, or other incumbent." So that if an incumbent ſhould be obſtinate, and refuſe to nominate, the Ordinary may avail himſelf of the actual employment of the curate, as a virtual nomination, and proceed to licenſe and aſſign him a ſtipend.

This clauſe contains another proviſion, of which, perhaps, the curates may be jealous. It gives the Ordinary power " to revoke, ſummarily, and with- " out proceſs, any licence granted to any curate " employed within his juriſdiction, and to remove

" ſuch

" ſuch curate, for ſuch good and reaſonable cauſe
" as he ſhall approve."

This power is granted to the ordinary for the eaſe of the incumbent. Incumbents, as I have ſaid, have been very unwilling, that their curates ſhould be licenſed. This unwillingneſs proceeded not from any general averſion to the canonical authority of of the Biſhop, but from an erroneous notion, that a curate, once licenſed, could not be removed, againſt his own will, even by the Biſhop, without a tedious and expenſive proceſs. The clergy were confirmed in this ſtrange notion, by concluſions, which they were rather in haſte to draw, from the famous caſe of Martin againſt Hinde, the real merits of which have been little underſtood. Dr. Hinde indeed was put to much trouble and expence by that curate. And, to get rid of his curate, he was obliged at laſt to get rid of his living. But the difficulty of his caſe aroſe not from any licenſing of the curate. Dr. Hinde lay under the obligation of a title, which he had given to Martin, for prieſts orders; and he had no proof againſt him of any ſuch miſconduct,

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as could be deemed ſufficient to annul that obligation. But the difficulty of his caſe was greatly aggravated by this very circumſtance, that the curate was not licenſed. Had Martin been a licenſed curate, his action againſt the rector would not have lain in the ſecular courts; and the great Earl Mansfield, the venerable Lord Chief Juſtice of the times, is well known to have declared, that "had "there been a licence, he could not have interfered "—he muſt have ſent the parties to their Biſhop." This ſtatute, however, has effectually provided, that no difficulty ſhall ever ariſe upon a licence. If an incumbent has any reaſonable cauſe, to deſire the removal of his curate, he will repreſent the caſe to the Ordinary: and the Ordinary, if he is ſatisfied with the cauſe, may ſummarily, and without proceſs, remove the curate.

In both theſe caſes, that of the appointment of a curate's ſtipend, without nomination; and that of the revocation of a licence, without proceſs; ſummary appeal is given to the Archbiſhop of the province.

There is another matter in this ſtatute, which makes a ſort of rider, and has little or no connection with its main object. The third clauſe, in the former part, declares a point of law with reſpect to augmented cures: Namely, that though held by licence, they are to be conſidered in law as benefices preſentative, to this effect, that one ſuch living, together with another living, ſhall make a plurality. And the fourth clauſe quiets the preſent poſſeſſors of ſuch pluralities in thoſe poſſeſſions.

Thus I have given you a full detail of the contents of this ſtatute—"The Curates Act"—a moſt ſeaſonable meaſure, in my judgement, to promote the intereſts of religion, and exalt the credit of the Church of England. I think it becomes me now to declare, that the only condition, upon which I will tolerate non-reſidence, is, that a reſident curate be retained, to be approved and licenſed by me, and with ſuch a ſtipend, and ſuch other emoluments, as, regard being had to the greatneſs of the cure and the value of the benefice, it ſhall ſeem good to me, according to the ſpirit of this ſtatute, to appoint. I have caught a whiſper, not in any part of this

dioceſe,

dioceſe, no matter where, but I have caught a whiſper, which I cannot paſs unnoticed. It is whiſpered, that it will be a very eaſy matter to elude all the wiſe proviſions of this act, by a civil contract between the non-reſident incumbent and his ſubſtitute. I think it my duty, to give explicit warning of the very bad policy of any ſuch attempt, and the diſappointment that muſt attend it. Any clergyman, who ſhall preſume to do the office of a curate, in any part of my dioceſe, without a regular licence from me, or my official, will be liable (without any regard to this ſtatute) to cenſures and penalties in the ſpiritual courts, of which, I promiſe him, he ſhall feel the utmoſt weight. And the non-reſident, who ſhall attempt any ſuch evaſions, will find, that there are both canons and ſtatutes againſt non-reſidence, of ſome or other of which, whatever may be dreamed of the privileges of particular ſituations, it will be difficult for him, in any ſituation, to eſcape the clutch. But this, my Reverend Brethren, is not ſaid to You. It is replied to the ill-omen'd whiſper of defiance, that has fallen upon my ear. To You I look, to the ingenuous, learned, and exemplary clergy of this dioceſe, I look, with the greateſt

greateſt confidence, for their cordial concurrence, in the meaſures which may be neceſſary to carry into effect the wiſe and pious intention of this ſtatute. It will reflect great diſgrace upon the parochial clergy, if it ſhould be reluctantly obeyed; and very great diſgrace upon the Biſhops, if it be not vigorouſly enforced.

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